

CARL T. ROWAN

Soviets Push Massive Anti-U.S. Drive in India

One of the best-kept secrets around town is the degree of U.S. government concern about a massive Communist propaganda drive in India.

Russia's "Radio Peace and Progress" has carried on a campaign for months that has irritated and frustrated officials in the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, and it is causing growing uneasiness in the State Department and other agencies here.

The campaign, also conducted through certain Indian publications like Blitz, a Bombay weekly, the Patriot, a New Delhi daily, and Link, a weekly magazine, has become so vitriolic that the Indian government has complained secretly to the Soviet Union.

But the Russians maintain that Radio Peace and Progress is an "unofficial organ of Soviet public opinion" and that the Soviet government does not control it. And of course the Soviets deny inspiring and paying for the anti-American diatribes in certain Indian publications.

Typical of the venomous propaganda that embarrasses even the Indian government was a story in Blitz shortly

after the election of President Richard M. Nixon. It said: "...Richard Nixon, who now walks into the presidency over the foully murdered corpses of his two great rivals—John Kennedy in the 1960 elections, and Robert Kennedy in the present fight—owes his office and power to J. Edgar Hoover, the executioner of his rivals."

Radio Peace and Progress broadcasts into India, in several local languages, an incessant stream of vituperation and allegations about various U.S. officials, agencies, and projects.

It strives mightily to convince Indians that the 671 Peace Corps volunteers are spies sent in "to further the aims of the infamous CIA." Other broadcasts seek to convince Indians that the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Asia Fund, and other groups are all part of a CIA scheme "to obtain India's national and military secrets."

The U.S. helped India to avert one of the great famines of all time by shipping in fantastic supplies of grain. Week after week this Russian radio station tells Indians that the

U.S. grain was "spoiled," or "deliberately poisoned."

The Soviets also have leveled vicious attacks on American business, especially the U.S. oil companies that are interested in developing India's off-shore oil fields. These attacks probably result from the fact that Russian oil interests also are bidding for oil drilling rights.

A bigger factor in Russia's anti-U.S. campaign may be the Soviet Union's interest in developing India as an ally against mainland China. Radio Peace and Progress has worked zealously to exploit India's conflict with China. The Soviets mounted a campaign to convince Indians that the renewed U.S.-Communist China talks in Warsaw would have represented a foul plot against Indian interests.

Department D (for "Disinformation") of the Soviet Intelligence Service, the KGB, has contributed several neatly forged documents to the anti-American campaign. One was a letter purportedly signed by a U.S. Navy Department official, Gordon C. Goldstein, alleging that U.S. bacteriologi-

cal warfare material was being stored insecurely in Vietnam and was causing "epidemic diseases in Vietnam and other Asian countries."

Soviet involvement in distributing this document to Indian newspapers seemed obvious to many when Radio Peace and Progress quoted from the Blitz issue of March 9 on March 7.

Fifteen years ago I found Indians talking about rejecting military aid from all sources and preventing a large Soviet presence in the country. Today there are 700 to 1,000 Russian military aid from all sources 1,000 or more economic advisors and technicians, and more than 500 Russians in the embassy, trade missions, information offices, and consulates.

There is no country in the world today where the Soviet Union works harder to raise its influence and reduce that of the United States than India. Propaganda seems to be a vital part of the Soviet effort.

The Soviets seem to be doing just well enough to make Americans look on with considerable alarm.

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